

# gone away my heart, locked inside a cage for you by milevenmirkwood

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**Summary:**

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Like everyone was okay.

## **gone away my heart, locked inside a cage for you**

### **Author's Note:**

My first attempt at Mike angst! This was inspired by the fun fact that Finn (Mike) was supposed to carry Millie (Eleven) in the last episode and that small fact still tears me up inside. How cute would that have been?! Ugh see you at the end.

"Mike mom's home from the store!" Nancy yelled from the base of the stairs.

"Coming!" Mike yelled back.

For some months now, Mike Wheeler insisted on taking in all the grocery bags. He carried his textbooks instead of putting them in a backpack. He played rocketship more with now three year old Holly. To everyone else, Mike was just being an average thirteen year old boy and trying to gain muscle. Maybe trying to look good for his upcoming freshman year of high school.

He could care less how he looked. He could care what anyone thought.

The look of pity on their faces only pushed him further.

He refused to forget her. She was out there, somewhere. He'll never give up and he didn't give a damn what anyone thought.

Mike walked down the stairs, preparing the act. He'd smile and hope it reached his eyes, laugh at their jokes and hope it didn't sound too hollow or fake. He'd act like everyone else.

Like everyone was okay.

Not too long ago, before this act, there was a tension that seemed to follow him. His friends would subtly glance at one another when they

thought he wasn't paying attention. So would his family, well his mom and Nancy.

Mike was on edge, not wanting to talk to anyone but also wanting someone to give a damn. Snapping at anyone and everyone. Coming home immediately after school, telling his friends that his mom wanted him to clean his room or some other lie, going immediately to the basement and sneaking out to look. Mike was sure that his mother knew, surely she'd call him for something between the time he came home and snuck back in before dinner, but she didn't say anything. His father ignored it like he did everything.

"It's just teenage angst. He's fine." He'd say between bites of chicken.

"IT'S NOT ANGST YOU FUCKING ASSHOLE. I LOST SOMEONE. SOMEONE I-I LOVED! NO ONE IS LISTENING TO ME AND NO ONE GIVES A FUCK. DON'T ACT LIKE YOU FUCKING KNOW ME WHEN YOU DON'T BOTHER TO GIVE A SHIT." Mike would think so loud, he was almost certain he was saying it if it weren't for the fork he was digging into his thigh.

It wasn't Ted Wheeler's fault. He never understood and never will.

But they do.

The thought still made Mike's face flush, heart race and fists clench. His friends, his best friends. It was like any other day really, Mike was too tired to be angry. He almost didn't want to go looking that day, his legs and feet screaming for mercy. Will, Lucas and Dustin were all Dustin's locker, speaking softly.

The locker door was open, none of them heard Mike over the loud chaos of the hallway between classes.

Or see him approach.

"What do you mean?"

"T-the slugs. I burn most of them now, but when I first started to cough them up, I just did it over the sink and washed them away." Will explained.

"But they didn't die?" Lucas asked.

"Hopper told my mom last night. You know the pipelines towards prospect street? The ones that burst?"

Dustin and Lucas nodded.

"So they're out there? Monsters?" Dustin asked and Will nodded.

"And I-I think that's what happened to Abigail. What if one of them got to her? What if she's dead and it's all my fault?" Will asked, his voice watery. Dustin and Lucas closed in on Will to hide his tears.

"Will come on man. You didn't know. You were scared and didn't want to worry anyone." Lucas said.

"That wasn't the only thing Hopper told my mom."

"What is it?" Dustin asked, almost impatiently.

"He thinks there's portals. The monsters. He has teams looking for Abigail, that there's almost no trace. If it were a person, some DNA or an animal, some tracking. Nothing."

"Holy shit." Dustin said, nervously placing both hands on his head.

"Okay okay. We need to get to class, but we cannot tell Mike about this." Lucas said. Dustin closed his locker and nearly jumped out of his skin as he saw who was on the other side.

"Mike! Hey man what's up?" Lucas asked, trying to act causal. He dropped the act as soon as he saw Mike's face. The pale boy was almost red, visibly shaking.

"Mike?" Will asked. The fact the he wasn't bothering to look at them made them even more nervous.

Mike walked away, not bothering to ease his way through the crowd and shoving his way through.

"Mike!" Lucas yelled, the boys following after him.

Mike burst through the side exit and made his way to the bike rack. He was angry, angrier than he's ever been. He could hear his "friends"

calling after him, but it only made him walk faster.

"Excuse me?"

Assholes, all of them. They were going to lie to him. About everything. He couldn't believe them, the ones he'd do anything for, jump off a cliff for fucks sake and they backstab him.

He wasn't ready to yell at them yet, he needed time to gather his thoughts. Besides that wasn't the backstab that hurt the most. Mike pulled out the key to his bike lock and knelt down.

"Excuse me young man! The instructional day is not over. Go back inside." a male voice said.

Shut the fuck up, Mike thought.

He proceeded to unlock his bike as the person continued to reprimand him. It only added to the anger. He was about to swing a leg over the bike when he heard it.

"Mike." Dustin said, Will and Lucas on either side of him.

Mike's head snapped up, almost animalistic. His friends almost flinched at the look Mike gave them, cold and angry with disgust. They didn't recognize him.

And Mike didn't recognize them.

Several times, Mike had to swerve to avoid people, cars or animals. He was so mad, white knuckles gripping the handlebars, he couldn't see straight. Finally he biked roughly onto the sidewalk, climbing off

and slamming the bike down.

"Hi there sweetie. How- hey hey you can't -hey!"

Mike crashed through the door, alerting a Jim Hopper, a cigarette in one hand and a piece of paper in the other.

"Tell. Me. Everything. Now."

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Hopper smirked at the boy still trying to break free from the handcuffs. Mike stopped struggling, head hanging.

"You done boy? It was just getting good." Hopper joked.

Mike mumbled something, head still hung.

"What was that?"

"Screw you." he whispered, coldly. His head snapped up, face red and tears flowing freely.

Hopper's smirk instantly dropped and was replaced with an unreadable one.

"Mike..." he trailed off.

"You were the only one who was honest with me. The only one who didn't tell me a bunch of bullshit. I trusted you." Mike said, looking up at the man he once admired. It was hard to describe how close the chief and Mike had become.

One day Mike was searching as usual and he came across a wooden box. Upon opening the box he found some blankets, tupperware filled with food and most importantly eggs. For the next two weeks, he hid in the forest for something. Finally, Jim Hopper approached the box with some clothes and more food. Mike jumped out, immediately realizing he shouldn't sneak up on the chief as he upon reflex reached for his gun.

That day, Hopper told him everything. Or so Mike thought.

"I didn't want to tell you until I had all the information I needed." Hopper said, lighting a fresh cigarette.

"What other information do you need? There are portals that might lead us to El. That's all we need to know."

"That's it huh? Yeah let's go into another dimension full of God knows what with what did your friend call it? A wrist rocket?" Hopper shot back, earning a glare from Mike.

"My wrist is hurting." Mike said, yanking at the cuffs.

"I'll take them off, but only if you promise to not go poking around looking for those portals. We got one boy back, we don't need to lose another."

"I promise."

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Mike looked out his window late that night. He knew the chief wasn't dumb enough to park within eyesight of the Wheeler house, but the chief should also know that Mike's not dumb enough to sneak out through the front door. Nevertheless, the coast looked clear.

Double checking his bag, filled with an old jacket of his, gloves, water and Eggos, Mike crept out of his room and down the stairs. He snuck past his father sleeping in the LaZboy and down into the basement. Mike shivered as the windy December air hit his face as he opened the back door. He grabbed his bike and walked it over to the fence, lifting the bike and gently tossing it over the fence before struggling to climb the fence himself. Mike made a great deal of noise and quickly walked away before anyone could catch him.

He flicked on his flashlight and looked around everywhere as he made his way to Mirkwood, looking out for the chief or a familiar pink dress. Mike wasn't sure what to look for, deciding that a portal to an alternate dimension would be pretty damn hard to miss.

After a while he looked down at his watch that read 3:15. Mike was pretty familiar with the woods, but it was really dark and he couldn't make out any key features. His legs were aching and the cold had nearly numbed his fingers. All of a sudden, his flashlight flickered and Mike's heart raced. He had recently changed the batteries, his mother questioning why he needed big ass D batteries, so there was no way it was dying yet. Mike looked around frantically, breath coming out as thick condensation. He froze suddenly, eyes widening at the sight of a strange glow from the trunk of a large tree. Slowly, Mike approach.

The hole was webby and pulsing, letting out a wretched odor that made Mike nearly vomit. Mike tore his gaze from the portal and looked around, fight or flight mode kicking in. He knew he couldn't go get help as the portals were unstable and he had no idea where he was. Mike took a deep breath and got on his hands and knees, slowly crawly into opening. The portal welcomed his presence, flexing a little wider and Mike's blood ran cold at the realization. Finally he climbed through, smelling horrible with the strange webbing all in his hair and self.

Mike climbed to his feet, looking all around. The world was dark and cold, atmosphere heavy with smoke as ash fell from the sky. Nancy had told him about the Upside Down, but this was nothing compared to her words. The world was eerily quiet, causing Mike's skin to crawl. Mike walked forward a little, not knowing where to start. If this was really an alternate dimension, El could be anywhere. He was hesitant to yell, not sure what roamed and lurked around this world.

The box, Mike thought. If all the real world's items remained in the world, so would the box. Mike walked through the decaying forest, breathing heavily against the smoky air. A loud screech made Mike halt immediately, breath caught in his throat and heart racing. Looking around, Mike saw nothing and decided to pick up the pace. He wasn't defenseless, but a zippo and lighter fluid would probably barely do the job. Nancy said that fire worked well on the



Demogorgon until it disappeared. Setting whatever the hell that was aflame, would do enough so hopefully he could get away. They could get away. Mike finally made it to the box and opened it, eggstatic to see that the food he and Hopper put in there not long ago was gone! Hopper tried to be realistic, saying that an animal might of gotten into the box.

Another distant screech filled the air and Mike shrugged off his backpack, pulling out the lighter fluid. He walked away from the box, hand resting on the zippo in his pocket. Mike walked aimlessly, trying to look while keep his ear peeled for whatever was out there. He didn't venture far from the box, figuring El would stay close to her only source of food and water. Mike wandered around more until a sight made his heart stop and he froze in his tracks.

A white sneaker almost glowing in contrast to the cold, dark world. Mike rushed over, the sneaker was attached to an alarmingly skinny leg. El laid on the ground, curled up into a ball and almost too still.

"El! El!" Mike yelled, falling to his knees and leaning over her body. She didn't respond.

Mike pulled her into his arms, cradling her head. He looked down at her anxiously and noticed her chest was barely rising.

"El? El can you hear me? El?" Mike said, fat tears falling down his face.

El whimpered, stirring a little in his arms.

"M-mike?" she said, voice dry and weak. Mike let out a laugh of relief and sniffled.

"Yes! Yes El it's me. It's Mike. I'm here. Upside down."

"N-not...safe."

"I know. Not safe for either of us." Mike said. "We need to leave now. Can you walk?"

El shook her head. Mike wrapped an arm around her upper body and another arm underneath her knees, lifting her bridal style. El curled herself into Mike's chest and Mike started the dread journey of looking for the portal out of here. Mike prayed that it was still there.

El was too light and Mike lifted her closer, sighing in relief as her weak warm breath caressed his face.

"Stay with me El. We'll be there soon. We can warm up in the blanket fort and eat Eggos. Everyone will be so happy you're home. We all missed you so much El." Mike said, looking desperately for the portal and growing more anxious by the minute.

"Mike...hurt." El said weakly.

"You're hurt? Where?" he asked and El shook her head.

"You hurt. I saw." El said and Mike understood. Mike nodded, tears welling.

"Yeah El I was hurt. And confused and angry and frustrated."

"I hurt Mike." she said sadly, tears slowly falling down her cheeks.

"No El! No you didn't hurt me. I missed you so much and all I wanted more than anything was for you to be there with me. You could never hurt me." Mike said, looking down at El who smiled weakly up at him.

"We go home?" she asked and Mike nodded with a smile

"Yeah El. We're going home."

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Mike woke slowly with a smile on his face. He froze and looked around. Mike was in bed, in his bedroom, in his house in Hawkins. Not the Upside Down. He sat up slowly, tears flowing down his cheeks as he struggled to breath and gripping his sheets with white knuckles.

He then quickly laid onto his stomach, burying his face into his pillow before letting out a loud pained scream. It was the best he felt in so long. He wasn't sure how long he screamed, but his head was throbbing painfully and his throat ached. Mike could hear pounding on his door, Nancy screaming his name and trying to get inside. But he didn't care. Mike then remembered what El said, that she saw his pain. He wanted to be strong, but he just screamed harder.

### **Author's Note:**

A dream sequence?! Ugh I'm horrible, but here's a box of tissues. Distribute them amongst yourselves. So how was my angst? Did you enjoy the pain? Let me know with a kudo or comment!

Also if you like this sort of thing, you should check out *With You* by Th3 W4nd3r1ng 0n3 on FF.net! It really hurts good!